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THE TEACHER'S OLD CHAIR

JOHN B. CABLE

THE TEACHER'S OLD CHAIR AND THE SQUIRREL

BY

JOHN B. CABLE

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THE TEACHER'S OLD CHAIR

AS school is nearly to an end, and
closes Friday afternoon;
We each will have a piece to speak and
then will give a little room
For this old chair; you call it mine,
as in it sitting, oft I be
And to a teacher, nice it is; this kind
provision made for me.

As all are through and did so well, I
introduce my Mr. Chair,
Who will be pleased to speak to you,
in broken tongue; with accent rare,
About his life; to you no doubt a curious
story it will seem,
Because his life was not as yours, a
playground and a summer's dream.

Dear Scholars: I, this old, old chair,
and standing here for many a day,
Will tell you of my birth and life; give
good attention all, I pray,
And follow close my truthful tale, be-
cause deep interest you will find
In what I did and what I wore and what
developed through my mind.

My father was a giant great; they called
him Oak; was large and strong,
Therefore kind nature showed the way
to bring the future life along,
Which through an acorn, first I was;
my coat was smooth; I wore a cap;
A little crown it seemed to me, and nicer
far than any hat.

When I had taken needed food, to make
me plump and round and neat,
The Lady in the moon looked down and
said to me in accent sweet;
You have a mission, little man; you
should not live for idle show,
Because you are no butterfly, and to
your work should wisely go.

A FROST one night was handed
down, which touched what you
might call my pen;
And being ripe, as people say, it
"nipped" the feeble little stem
That held me to the generous branch,
and fed me all the summer through.
But when the sun had found the frost,
I broke away and bade adieu.

And arrow-like I shot to earth, and I
was never found alone,
Because all things had been prepared
for comfort, in my rustic home.
I looked about and saw the leaves;
they made me such a lovely bed
That to go back to dizzy heights, I never
would, I frankly said.

The squirrels jumped and played about,
their little stories they would tell
Of how they watched me days ago,
and how they saw me when I fell,
And while they thought I frightened
was; that probably my head would
split,
They truly knew no harm would come;
that harmed I would not be, a bit.

I wished to rest, and this I did; my
lovely home, my charming bed,
Filled every want my heart desired,
and every wish within my head.
The storms came on, I sweetly slept;
beneath a mantle white I lay;
They called it snow; it was as pure as
incense on a summer's day.

When months had gone and spring had
come, with ecstacy my heart had
welled;
My coat no longer was a fit; the threads
no longer firmly held
But gave away; so strange it seemed;
I hoped my crown was firm and
tight,
Yet curiously it almost seemed, a soul
within was seeking light.

In this I seemed to have no voice;
kind Nature, faithful to her task
Was working out what God designed;
I need not any questions ask;
But be submissive, for the time was
creeping on, and come it would
When I should fill the place designed;
as father, who a giant stood.

My inner heart, a spark contained;
the germ we recognize as life;
Although I had been living still, the
fact thereof was never rife;
But as a bud about to burst, that all
the world might know and see
The workings of a Master mind; so
strangely sweet; a mystery.

A little tendril, or a shoot, to ease my
heart was searching deep;
In gentle way, to find a place, and
silently its way did creep
Until it found the one designed; where
mother earth had stored away
A morsel for the hungry mouth; here
I would spend a life-long day.

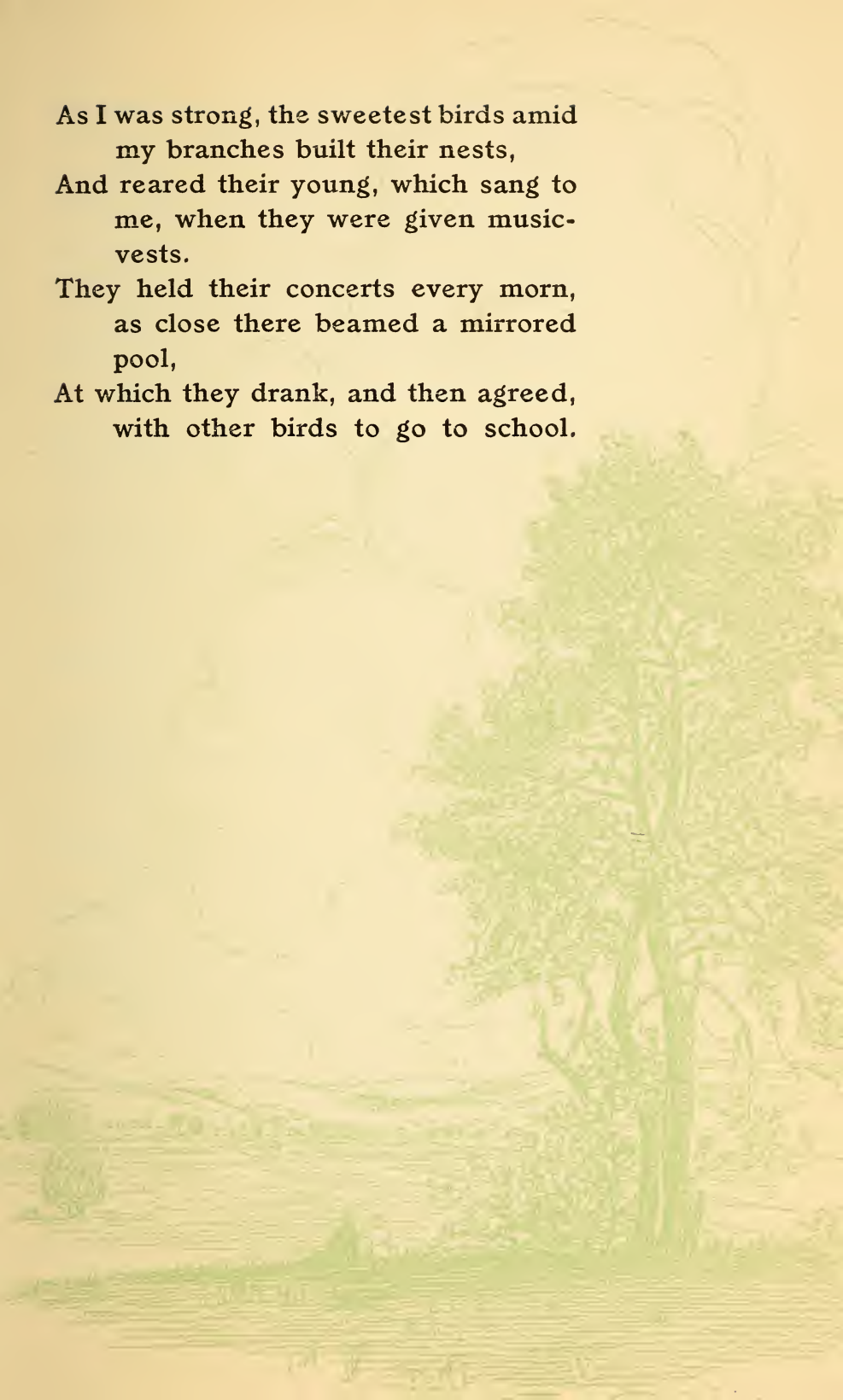
It ate and thrived, as well it might;
earth's sacred table was its own;
A worthy heir had it become; pro-
nounced by One upon the Throne,
And strong it waxed; a tender stem
at first, and still it seemed to me
Was perfect in its woodland garb; or
as a little school-boy tree.

The changing seasons brought it joy;
the springtime and the summer
too;
The autumn when it lost its coat; yet
left no thought of being blue;
Crisp winter was its time of rest; gained
strength in every stubborn storm,
And I will take the pronoun now; I
ne'er was stronger since was born.

I looked at others of my age; I strove
to keep with them a-pace;
My lineage was good indeed, and win
I would in life's wise race;
I studied well the other shrubs, but
studied most what seemed to me
The lesson which I best should know;
how to upbuild my own good tree.

My cover now was known as bark and
rough it seemed to those outside,
But knowing what reposed beneath,
their verdict I have not denied,
But kept along with heart and limbs;
the taunts fell lightly on my ear,
While others talked, I harder worked;
dismissed I not the thought of
cheer.

As I was strong, the sweetest birds amid
my branches built their nests,
And reared their young, which sang to
me, when they were given music-
vests.
They held their concerts every morn,
as close there beamed a mirrored
pool,
At which they drank, and then agreed,
with other birds to go to school.



I THINK perhaps three hundred
years, the sunshine and the
shadows came;
The showers and the rainbow too;
that brightened up, if it should rain,
And when kind Nature had discerned
that I no greater here would grow,
Some men were sent to cut me down,
and to the mill must truly go.

With axes keen they chopped and
chopped; with them it seemed to
be an art;
I weakened when they reached what
seemed the very tendrils of my
heart;
No longer I the forests pride; no longer
I the monarch strong;
No longer should my dancing leaves,
sing to the breeze their summer
song;

I fell; and with a deep, sad moan, I
heavy fell upon the ground;
The woods, lamenting as it seemed,
carried about the solemn sound;
The birds and squirrels changed their
tune in reverence it seemed for me,
For I had fallen as they said; yet fallen
as a noble tree.

They sawed me up in logs 't is true;
in lengths that they could haul
away,
And had they not, remember this,
I had not been with you today;
Because, except in lesser form, con-
flicting forces may not fill
Their coffers through our precious lives,
and take us to a dusty mill.

They placed me on a carriage smooth;
it seemed to me unwritten law;
It took me to some naughty teeth, in
what was wisely termed a saw;
It sang and buzzed and whirled along,
and slashed me to the very heart,
In slabs and planks and boards like-
wise; identity had lost its art.

A planer then they put me through, to
quite remove the roughness left
By cruel teeth, that ruffled up; that
gave me neither joy or rest,
But man is wise, he seems to feel,
where trees at last are sure to go,
Yet often in his weakness guessed, if
wisdom shall his pathway show.

Yes, I was quarter-sawed they said,
and that meant something fine,
indeed,
And I was sought throughout the town;
wood-workers all were now in need
Of flawless timber; smooth and nice.
Until that time I had not spoke.
I simply said, my searching friend, one
day you lunched beneath an oak.

Beneath the branches of an oak, and
they were just a part of me;
We both were one, and every part that
went to make the giant tree;
I shielded you from sun and shower,
upon my plot I gave you rest,
But now I am at your command, do
unto me as seemeth best.

Said he I prize your very worth; your
reason and your meekness too
And I, a man in truest sense, will only
justice with you do;
He took me to a busy shop, where men
were dressed in white it seems;
But each had spoke his little piece,
and very few were in their teens.

They trimmed me in peculiar way;
bored holes and filled with wooden
pegs.
They polished me; I fairly shone; they
built me up with jointless legs;
A strong support was built around the
rear: that seemed a little nack,
Designed, the workman said to me,
to well support a weary back.

When I was finished, as they said,
I was the King Bee of the day;
Directors of a District came, and paid
the price; took me away
To where you children come to school;
to learn the book; to use the pen;
To speak your piece in after years;
when youth is passed; when you
are men.

Now, I, this old and soiled chair, have
told the story of my birth,
And how I battled many years, to hold
my place upon the earth.
And if you think your life is hard;
if little worries change your hair;
Remember well the piece I spoke. Re-
member well the Teacher's Chair.

THE SQUIRREL

HIS little world is as dear to him,
no doubt as mine to me;
He capers about for his winter's store,
'neath a great old chestnut tree
That has kept him waiting for many
months for the promised store
ahead
And he really believed, if he kept to
work, through winter he would be
fed.

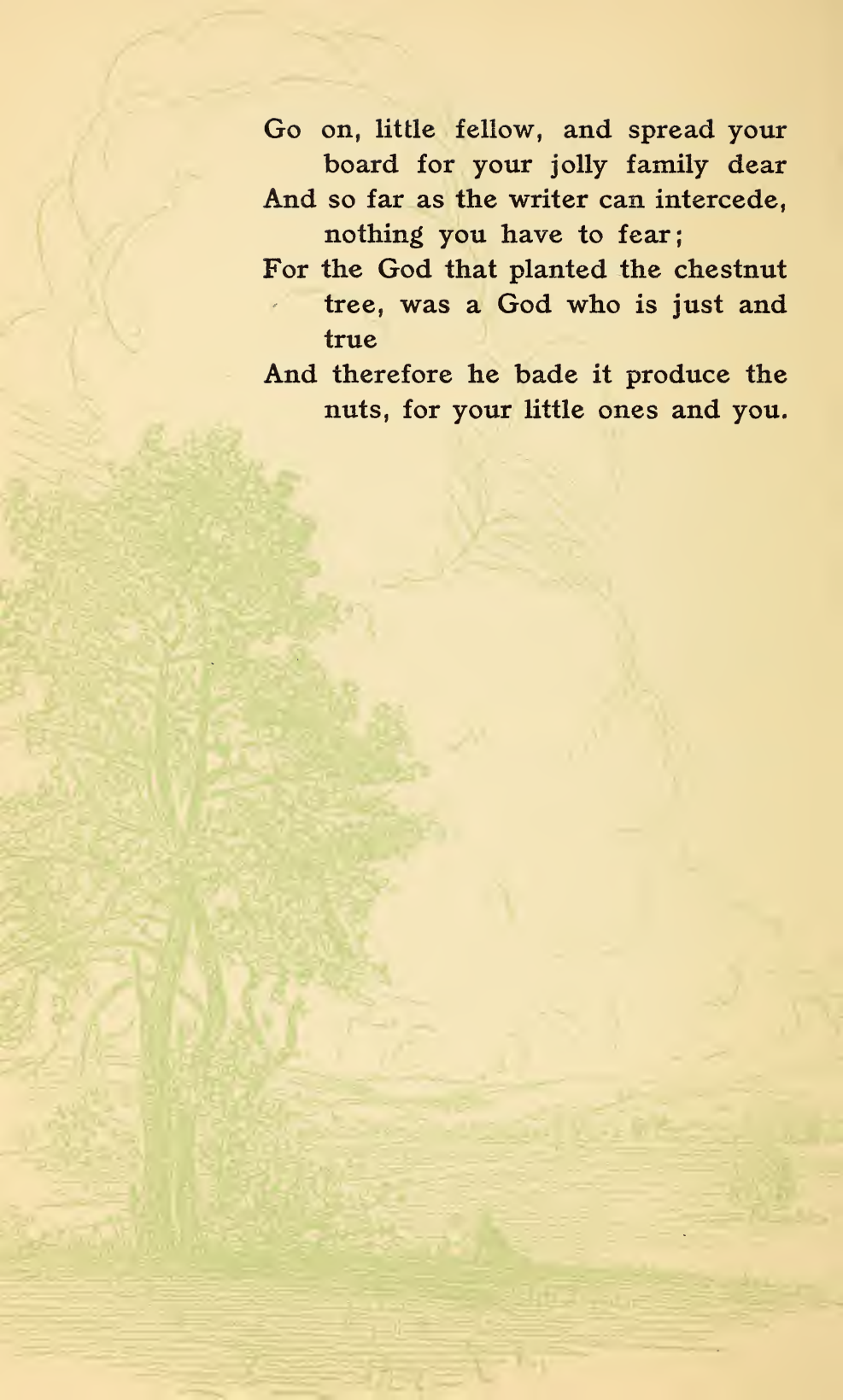
With his "clever" claws he can climb
a tree, and sauce you half-way up;
Will scold and sputter and dare you
climb, with your talked-of loving
cup.
His wisdom-cap is fitting close; he has
learned his lesson well
And is more than pleased to repeat to
you, if given a chance to tell.

His teeth are as sharp as little blades,
the Damascus sort you know,
Which hold an edge in the autumn time
and even through ice and snow;
And a little boquet he always has, that
rainbow-like bends down
Very close to his coy little ears; well
up on his head; his crown.

And his little children he teaches well;
they each must their lesson learn,
And that is to gather their own sweet
crumbs, and thereby a living earn,
For the fathers and mothers often said,
they were taught and always found
They could not do as the sweet school-
marms, congenially board around.

When I see a squirrel with winter store,
all nicely housed away;
I think, what a lovely fellow you, to
prepare for a winter's day.
I would not rob you of what you have,
except were a robber I,
And if I did, I would get my pay in the
" sweet " of the by-and-by.

Go on, little fellow, and spread your
board for your jolly family dear
And so far as the writer can intercede,
nothing you have to fear;
For the God that planted the chestnut
tree, was a God who is just and
true
And therefore he bade it produce the
nuts, for your little ones and you.



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